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UNCLAS MADRID 000892

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SP](#) [PSOE](#)

SUBJECT: SPAIN: BIODATA ON JOSE LUIS RODRIGUEZ ZAPATERO,
PRESIDENT-ELECT

REF: MADRID 880

1. (SBU) On March 14, the Spanish Workers Socialist Party (PSOE) led by Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero defeated the incumbent Popular Party (PP), in Spain's general elections (see reftel for discussion of election results). Zapatero should be in place as President of the government by late April.

2. (SBU) Zapatero was born on August 6, 1960 in Valladolid (the capital of the Autonomous Community of Castilla-Leon) and comes from a left-leaning background. He is the grandson of a republican captain who was executed by Nationalists at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Zapatero was granted military deferments due to his law studies and has not served in the military. He has devoted almost his entire adult life to politics. Today, Zapatero is considered a center-left, social democrat.

3. (SBU) Zapatero joined PSOE in the city of Leon in 1979 and became the leader of its youth wing in 1982. By 1986, he held the number-two position in PSOE-Leon and was the youngest representative elected to Congress. Between 1989 and 1993, Zapatero served as PSOE-Leon's Regional Secretary. He was appointed to its Federal Executive Committee in 1994. In 1997, after President Felipe Gonzales resigned as PSOE party leader, Zapatero was seen as the "next generation" of the Spanish Socialist Party. After the Socialists were defeated in Spain's 2000 general elections, Zapatero presented himself as candidate for PSOE Secretary General. In 2000, he defeated Socialist Party "baron" Jose Bono and two other candidates to become PSOE Secretary General and leader of opposition in Congress.

4. (SBU) Zapatero holds a law degree and was Professor of Constitutional Law at the University of Leon. He married Sonsoles Espinosa in 1988 and has two daughters.

5. (SBU) Zapatero speaks rudimentary English. He neither smokes nor drinks. He enjoys jogging, fishing, soccer and poetry.
ARGYROS